

AM Matthew 5:1-12 The Blessing of God's Kingdom Now

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[0 : 00] Bible to Matthew chapter 5 and that's found on page 976 in the Church Bible. We're going to read from verses 1 to 12 of this part of Matthew chapter 5 which is the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's great sermon.

Verse 1.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

[1 : 39] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Blessed are the great thanksgiving for the Lord's great, for they shall be called sons of the Lord. Blessed are the people who are broken, for they shall be called sons of the Lord. For your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Amen. Let us pray. Please turn with me in the Bible to Matthew chapter 5. if you've got a really good memory you will perhaps remember that in our previous studies in the sermon on the mount we have looked at the characteristic marks of those whom Jesus says are blessed we've looked at the poor in spirit what that means we've looked at what it means to mourn what it means to be meek what it means to hunger and thirst after righteousness what it means to be merciful what it means to be pure in heart what it means to be a peacemaker and what it means to be persecuted for righteousness sake those who are brought into God's kingdom will by God's grace become the people who reflect these very characteristics it's important to understand that because the Beatitudes are not commands telling us what we should be rather in these statements we find statements of blessedness we find that Jesus in these statements of blessedness is describing what the power of God's kingdom makes us into from being sinners he saves us and he makes us into his holy people and his holy people are marked by these characteristics listed in these Beatitudes

Jesus in other words assures us that his people will show these hallmarks these character traits now this is the only way to be blessed and happy it is not the rich it is not the happy in this world it is not the forceful it is not the merciless it is not those who are not meek but it is the poor in spirit who are blessed it is the meek who are blessed it is those who hunger and thirst after righteousness because they see the lack of that righteousness in themselves whom Jesus says are blessed so it is important to grasp this very basic point it is these kind of people and these alone who know

God's blessing upon their lives and this is something we constantly need to be reminded of because the world in which we live tells us a very different message it has a very different story to tell when it comes to the question of how to be blessed and happy and since we are fallen and sinful creatures our natural disposition within us is to listen to the world instead of listening to the voice of the word of God this is the way to be blessed the way that Jesus in this sermon is teaching us let us listen to his voice let us walk in his ways now this morning

[6 : 20] I want to turn your attention to the blessings the blessings listed in these Beatitudes and to look at them together if we have time this morning because they all belong together just as the characteristic marks listed in the Beatitudes belong together that they all belong to the individual Christian believer so all these blessings listed in the Beatitudes belong to every single Christian believer and Jesus makes this clear by the way he begins and ends the Beatitudes do you know that the first blessing listed is the same as the last blessing listed blessed are the poor in spirit verse 3 why for theirs is the kingdom of heaven notice it doesn't say by the way theirs will be the kingdom of heaven as if that belongs to the future but theirs is right now the kingdom of heaven it belongs to the poor in spirit now today in the here and now and then you notice that the last blessing in verse 10 blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake theirs is the kingdom of heaven so between these two bookends are mentioned several other blessings and they all belong together they are one package and I think this is very important and significant in these beatitudes the Lord

Jesus Christ is teaching us this it's as if he's coming to us and saying this to us you as my disciples have already in the here and now entered into the kingdom of God yes it is true that one day this kingdom of God will be consummated sometime in the future the kingdom of God is going to be revealed in all its marvelous glory and wonder that day is coming when the loud voices will say in the words of Revelation chapter 14 and verse 15 the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever but while that day is future nevertheless all the blessings that are expected to come to come to us in the future kingdom of heaven are already being experienced by Christ's people now and this is why the apostle Paul can write to the

Ephesians in this way that though they lived in Ephesus in this world yet they also lived in Christ Jesus and that in Christ Jesus he writes to the believers there and he says the father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places so here they are living in Ephesus in this world and yet at the same time they live in Christ Jesus and the father has blessed them with every spiritual blessing there is not one spiritual blessing that belongs to the future that they don't enjoy and have access to now the apostle Paul also says two very interesting things to the Galatian Christians and to the Corinthian Christians in the letters that he wrote to those churches to the

Galatians he says that they have been rescued from the present evil age and to the Corinthians he says that the end of the ages has come upon you so on the one hand God has rescued them out of this age this present evil age and he's put them somewhere else he's put them into the kingdom of his son and on the other hand he says to the Corinthians that the end of the ages the goal of the ages the last time if you like the last day if you like has already come upon them that the power of the age to come that the blessings of the age to come has dawned upon them and they have access to this blessing of

God in other words God has taken us out of this age and he has put us into a new age the age to come and this means that all the blessings of the age to come are now ours they belong to us already and we will enjoy many of them now and we will enjoy all of them when Jesus returns in glory now to those who first heard the Lord Jesus deliver this sermon called the Sermon on the Mount the message to them was this the future is now the future is now the reign of God the kingdom of God with all its blessings which you expected to come at the end of the age and at the close of history has arrived in the here and now the king is standing before you enter his kingdom enter his kingdom experience the life of the kingdom experience the power of the kingdom that can transform you and make you an you taste the blessings of the future now there's a famous little rhyme that was said of a godly puritan preacher of the 17th century whose name was

[13 : 22] Richard Sibbes and it went like this of this blessed man let this just praise be given heaven was in him before he was in heaven isn't that a beautiful thing to say about somebody heaven was in him before he was in heaven but those words are equally true of every Christian because all Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit heaven has come down and glory has filled our souls the Apostle Paul taught us that the Holy Spirit is the first payment the down payment that guarantees the future inheritance that future inheritance has been brought forward and deposited within us in the person of the indwelling

Holy Spirit heaven was in him before he was in heaven how wonderful and how glorious that is it was Karl Marx who said that Christianity was the opiate of the people opiate is a drug that dulls our senses it's a phrase that would make us believe that the Christian has to go through this life with very little in the hope and expectation of better things in the hereafter but that is a misunderstanding of the gospel it's a misunderstanding of true Christianity because Jesus teaches us that he gives us this blessing now with even more blessings to come so what are these blessings that belong to those to whom the kingdom of heaven is given well the first one listed is comfort verse 4 blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted

I'm reminded of the Lord Jesus Christ at the beginning of his ministry you remember how he went into the synagogue in Nazareth and on the Sabbath day he took the scroll of the prophet Isaiah he turned to Isaiah chapter 61 and he read these unforgettable words the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor to bind up the broken hearted to comfort all who mourn and provide for those who grieve in Zion to give them a beautiful head dress instead of ashes the oil of gladness instead of mourning and a garment of praise instead of a faint spirit and after reading those words he said these immortal words today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing

Jesus has been anointed to bring comfort to those who mourn our mourning over sin involves a sense of guilt and shame we experience regret and separation from God and in our shame and guilt and regret and this sense of alienation from God Jesus comes to us in the gospel and in the words of Psalm 3 verse 3 he puts his hand under our chin and he lifts up our head and he says to us lift up your eyes oh sorrowing one look to me for I am the resurrection and the life in me there is forgiveness and pardon for all of your sins there is no need to carry the burden of sin and shame throughout your life in the hope that one day in the future it might be removed no listen

I have taken that burden away there is comfort for you now so put off the garments of mourning now today experiencing my pardon and forgiveness is a time to rejoice receive my comfort that I offer to you do you remember how the Lord Jesus gave a beautiful illustration of this in his parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector two men who went up to the temple to pray the Pharisee stood at the front and he prayed publicly and proudly and he spoke of his achievements and the merits of what he had done he spoke about his prayers and his fasting he spoke about his tithes and offerings he spoke about how he gave to charity to the poor he was so proud of himself by contrast the tax collector was too ashamed to lift up his eyes to heaven and he stood as far from the front as he possibly could get and he beat his breast and he said

[19 : 39] God be merciful to me a sinner literally the sinner as if there were no other sinners in the world but just him and do you remember how the parable ended do you remember Jesus' concluding words it was that the tax collector and not the Pharisee the religious man that went to his house justified before God can you imagine the stunned silence among his hearers when they heard those words they probably looked at each other and said did we hear him right did he fluff the punchline of the parable no there was no mistake Jesus was teaching that the person who mourns over his sin contrary to all expectation is not condemned but pardoned and blessed and surely that is blessedness beyond all expectation it led one hymn writer to say great God of wonders all thy ways are matchless godlike and divine but the fair glories of thy grace more godlike and unrivaled shine who is a pardoning

God like thee or who has grace so rich and free comfort and then the second blessing the Lord mentions is the inheritance which the meek will be given Jesus says that the meek will inherit the earth what does that mean the meek will inherit the earth well to understand this we need to go back to the creation you remember how when God created man he created him to rule over the earth as God's steward God gave Adam the first man dominion over all things remember the words of Genesis chapter 1 where God said to Adam fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth but man wanted more didn't he he wanted more and you remember how

Adam and Eve fell to the serpent's temptation when the serpent came to them and said you will be like God knowing good and evil which seems to imply you will be able to decide things for yourself you will be like God able to decide things for yourself and that is how the fall of man began and what happened man was made by God to rule the world for God but man tried to seize the world for himself and as a result he lost the very thing he tried to steal and as well he lost the dignity and the honour that God had put upon him instead of bowing in meekness before his gracious master as

God's creature and as God's son should do man in his pride and in his arrogance tried to grab the very place of God and the rest of the Bible from Genesis right through to Revelation shows us how God in his grace and through the redeeming work of his son the second Adam would undo the work of the devil and restore man to the place of blessing that God wants for him God was going to reverse this tragedy of the fall and when you read through the Old Testament scriptures you see some of the promises that God made and some of those promises included the land the land that he gave to the children of Israel but sometimes the people of Israel looked on the land as if it was theirs by right as if it did not matter whether they lived in it with meekness before God or not and time and time again God had to teach them that pride always loses what it seeks to gain and the fact that their greatest leader

Moses was the meekest man on earth should have taught the Israelites a very great lesson especially when we follow Moses life and realise that he was forbidden to enter the land of promise because on one occasion this meekest man in all the earth failed to be meek but in his pride and temper sinned against God but when Jesus came into the world we see a man who was and still is meek and humble I think it's the only place in the gospels where Jesus speaks directly of himself and his self description is so beautiful Matthew chapter 11

[25 : 47] I am gentle and lowly in heart Jesus how do you want us to think about you I am gentle and lowly in heart you see this man this second Adam this Lord Jesus Christ the son of God bowed in humility before his master and he submitted himself to the will of God and he submitted himself also to the suffering that God's will for the salvation of the world involved you remember how Paul speaks about this in Philippians chapter 2 about how Jesus humbled himself and became obedient obedient to the point of death and even the death of a cross and then what follows next therefore because of this humility and meekness therefore

God has highly exalted him and given to him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and that is why Jesus was able to say to his disciples just before he went from earth into heaven after his death and resurrection all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me it belongs to him this humble lowly gentle man has been exalted to the highest place and he has been given all authority in heaven and on earth and now my friends through the mission of the church Jesus Christ is claiming what is his by right not just the promised land of Palestine the

Lord Jesus Christ has inherited the whole earth remember what Psalm 2 verse 8 says ask of me says God to his anointed one and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession and one day the sovereign rule of Jesus will be seen publicly for the present that is seen by faith only by the eyes of faith but faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen and we believe and are sure that this world belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible teaches us that we are going to share in the rule of this world with the Lord Jesus Christ he's going to share his kingdom with us for he wants us to be his stewards of the world once more think of what

Paul wrote in Romans chapter 8 and verse 18 and I read it to you in the words of J.B. Phillips translation which really brings it to life in my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us the whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own and in the book of revelation we are told that Jesus has made his people kings and priests and they shall reign upon the earth blessed of the meek for they shall inherit the earth through Jesus Christ I'd hope to take all of these blessings together but time has beaten me maybe the next time

I come we'll follow on through this portion of scripture and see what else the Lord has given to us through the gospel of the son Jesus Christ but let me say as we close it is only through Jesus it is only through trusting in Jesus it is only through entering into the kingdom of heaven now that we can experience this happiness this blessedness and if you haven't come to the Lord Jesus Christ if you are pursuing and following some other way to find happiness in this world let me tell you that will be a fruitless search you will not get what you are looking for but if you come to the Lord Jesus Christ you will be truly blessed for you will now enter into his kingdom and all the blessings of his kingdom will be yours to have now and in an even greater measure yours forever and ever when he comes again may the

[31 : 21] Lord bless his word to us